



News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Sign up by March 30 for unusable pesticide collections at Oroville and Okanogan

OLYMPIA — Residents, farmers, business owners and public agencies can safely dispose of old or unusable agricultural and commercial grade pesticides without paying any hazardous waste disposal fees. The state Department of Agriculture will host a collection event May 15 near Oroville and May 16 near Okanogan. To participate, you must sign up by March 30.

Because walk-in customers cannot be served, only those who sign up by March 30 will receive directions to the site, hours of operation, and needed transportation documents. To sign up, call (360) 902-2056, toll free 1-877-301-4555 or send e-mail to wastepesticide@agr.wa.gov.

Empty containers and other waste, such as fertilizers, motor oil and household hazardous waste (HHW) are not accepted for disposal by this program. For information on how to dispose or recycle these items, contact Okanogan County at (509) 422-2602. Dispose of HHW free at Okanogan County's HHW facility at the central landfill on most Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Special household and garden pesticide disposal days are scheduled for Saturday, May 5 and 12. Reservations are not required to dispose of HHW at the facility, but the facility is limited to household generated waste and does not accept business waste. In addition, Northwest Ag Plastics, Inc. (509-965-6809 or www.nwagplastics.com) operates a no fee empty plastic pesticide container recycling program.

Customers transport unusable agricultural and commercial grade pesticides to the collection site where the Department of Agriculture takes possession of them and a hazardous waste contractor packs them for safe and legal transportation and disposal. The Department of Agriculture oversees collection in cooperation with the Okanogan County Department of Public Works and the State Department of Ecology.

"We are responsible for the pesticides once we take possession of them," said Joe Hoffman, disposal program coordinator at Department of Agriculture. "We become the owner of the pesticides before they are turned over to the contractor. Customer names do not appear on any manifests or disposal documents. That is significant because, in most cases, owners of hazardous materials are responsible for life for the cost of disposal or any environmental cleanup that may be needed should a transportation accident or disposal site leak occur."

Leaky containers or improper pesticide disposal may create serious health problems for humans and animals, contaminate drinking water supplies or cause significant environmental damage. It is also expensive and difficult to clean up contaminated soil or groundwater. These problems can be prevented by proper disposal of pesticides that are no longer needed. Department of Agriculture will provide customers with supplies necessary to protect broken or leaky containers to ensure safe transportation to the collection site.

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The program also provides a disposal opportunity for persons who are quitting business or selling property due to the unfortunate economic conditions that exist in much of the agriculture industry. In some cases, a storage room containing pesticides can delay a property transaction.

"We also hope to reach new property owners who may find barrels, bottles or cans of unknown substances left behind by the previous owner," Hoffman said. "A mystery container with unknown contents may be the most hazardous feature of your new property, especially if you have curious children or the container is leaking. We will help to identify the contents and, if it is a pesticide, we will arrange to have it removed at no cost to you."

There have been 87 regional collection events at various locations around the state since the program began in 1988. Through the program, 3,645 customers have properly disposed of more than 1,075,000 pounds of waste pesticides.

For more information, or to sign up for the Oroville or Okanogan events, call (360) 902-2056, toll free 1-877-301-4555 or send e-mail to wastepesticide@agr.wa.gov. Address mail to: Waste Pesticide Program, Washington State Department of Agriculture, PO Box 42589, Olympia, WA 98504-2589.

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